

Voluntary Anonymous Survey:
Early-Out Options (VERA\VSIP) and
Options for Directed Relocation

Overview

Given the uncertainties of the times and the seemingly ever changing facts with respect to potential early-out and incentive offers (VERA\VSIP), we can see that there is a great deal of data gathering that could be undertaken that would help both the employees as well as management proceed in a manner which would be more effective on the behalf of both parties. In that light we provide this brief survey for your consideration.

Background

With a VERA/VSIP being proposed, and Directed Relocation on the horizon, as well as other changes in the wind, it would be helpful to all of us to know at this point in time, what decisions you are considering. We offer this survey as a way to let others know what you are thinking, anonymously, and as a group.

What is a VERA?

A Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) is commonly referred to as early-out retirement, and that's exactly what this authority offers—an opportunity to retire in advance of meeting the age and/or service requirements normally needed. None of the usual penalties for early retirement are in effect for those under the FERS system. For employees under the CSRS system (and FERS employees with a CSRS component) the annuity is penalized for those under 55. This may be an unlikely case.

What is a VSIP?

The Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment Authority(VSIP), also known as buyout authority, allows agencies that are downsizing or restructuring to offer employees lump-sum payments up to \$25,000 as an incentive to voluntarily separate.

OPM Eligibility Criteria for a combined VERA\VSIP Offer

- (1) Meet the VERA minimum age and service requirements (**i.e., the employee has completed at least 20 years of creditable service and is at least age 50, or has completed at least 25 years of creditable service regardless of age**). The minimum age and service requirements are set by statute in 5 U.S.C. 8336(d)(2) for CSRS employees, and in 5 U.S.C. 8414(b)(1) for FERS employees. OPM has no authority to waive either the minimum age or service requirement for VERA eligibility.
- (2) Have been continuously employed by the Agency for at least 31 days before the date that the Agency initially requested OPM approval of VERA. This period becomes 3 years when including the VSIP.
- (3) Hold a position that is not a time-limited appointment.
- (4) Have not received a final removal decision based upon misconduct, or unacceptable performance.
- (5) Hold a position covered by the agency's VERA\VSIP.
- (6) Retire under the VERA option during the agency's VERA window.

Please consider the OPM VERA/VSIP criteria listed above regarding your individual eligibility and answer the following questions. This will give us a better pulse on our local situation and perhaps offer options.

Survey Starts Here: Please underline or circle your answers. There are no restrictions on the size of your comment(s). Please fold your survey so the outside is blank before you attend the ORD All-Hands Meeting.

1) Are you eligible for a VERA\VSIP offer based on the above OPM criteria? Y or N

Comment:

If your answer to question 1 was "Yes," please answer questions 2-9; or "No" just answer questions 5-9.

In considering your career and retirement planning, would the offer of a VERA\VSIP at the end of the leave year (retirement in January 2018) versus the end of the 2017 fiscal year (retirement in September 2017) make any difference in your planning?

2) Would you prefer and accept the VERA\VSIP offer at the end of the calendar (leave) year (January 6, 2018, or before)? Y or N Comment:

3) Would you prefer and accept a VERA\VSIP offer at the end of the 2017 fiscal year (September 30, 2017)? Y or N Comment:

4) Is it your preference NOT to accept a VERA\VSIP offer for either date? Y or N Comment:

5) If you are offered moving expenses to relocate to another ORD facility by the end of FY18 (September 30, 2018), will you move? Y or N Comment:

6) If instead of relocating, you could work a short (less than one year) extended period in Las Vegas, completing journal articles, or wrapping up your work, and then retire, would that work for you? Y or N Comment:

7) What do you think about this use of the survey to share information and develop a snapshot of what your colleagues are thinking? OK or Not OK Comment:

8) Is the Program of Requirements released this week describing the new office space for EPA staff starting in 2020, factoring into your thinking? Y or N Comment:

9) Any other topics? Y or N Comment: